Ensuring Your Website is Accessible

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This information is available in alternate formats on request. Please contact the Manitoba Accessibility Office at MAO@gov.mb.ca or 204-945-7613 or toll free at 1-800-282-8069, ext. 7613.

Legal disclaimer: This document does not provide legal advice. It aims to assist organizations to understand the Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation. The information does not replace the content of the Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation or the Accessibility for Manitobans Act. If there is any conflict between this resource and the regulation or the act, the latter two shall prevail.

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Web Accessibility Benefits Everyone

The Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation requires organizations to remove barriers for people with disabilities who use their websites and view their web content. It also includes both Internet and Internal websites.

Building an accessible website involves ensuring users of all abilities can access online information including those with visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, language, learning and neurological disabilities. This can also include people using a slow internet connection or people with limited technological knowledge.

Accessible Websites and Web Content

Internet (External) Websites:
All organizations must ensure that their internet (external) websites and web content meet or exceed globally followed World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA if the following applies:

- the website is published or receives a significant update on or after this standard comes into force;
- the web content is published on or after this standard comes into force; and
- the web content is required to access an organization's goods and services.

Intranet (Internal) Sites:
The intranet (internal) sites of public sector organizations, large municipalities, educational institutions and libraries sites must conform to WCAG 2.1 Level AA.

What is the W3C / WCAG?

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is an international community that develops open (free) standards to ensure the long-term growth of the Web.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are developed through the W3C process, in cooperation with individuals and organizations around the world. The goal is to provide a single shared standard for web content accessibility that meets the needs of individuals, organizations, and governments internationally.

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Overview of the General Requirements of WCAG 2.1 Level AA:

- ✓ **Write using the principles of plain language.**
- ✓ **Provide text alternatives for any non-text content, including images, video and audio.**
- ✓ **Use animation, video and audio carefully:** Add captions to all prerecorded videos with sound. Describe movements where possible.
- ✓ **Plan heading structure and use styles for headings to ensure proper document formatting.**
- ✓ **Ensure logical reading order.**
- ✓ **Provide good colour contrast:** Use a colour contrast ratio of at least 4:5:1 for text and images. If unsure use a colour contrast checker to verify contrast meets requirements.
- ✓ **Provide user control:** Allow end-users the ability to control audio speed and playback. Never implement time limits on a user.
- ✓ **Allow keyboard navigations:** All parts of the site must be keyboard-accessible and allow keyboard users to navigate away from all parts of the site.
- ✓ **Allow for zooming:** Allow resizing of text up to 200%.
- ✓ **Use true text instead of images of text:** Always present important information as text and never include within an image file.
- ✓ **Ensure links are descriptive:** Terms such as "Click Here" or "Continue" are not descriptive enough. Links should tell the user exactly where they will go if they click on them.
- ✓ **Ensure adequate font size:** Ensure text is readable. Use a text no smaller than 16pt for easy-to-read websites.

Always review and re-evaluate your website regularly to ensure it meets accessibility standards. To review the full list of requirements by visiting Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

The Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation

The Accessible Information and Communication Standard was enacted in Manitoba on May 1, 2022, under the Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

Learn more about this standard and your organization's compliance deadlines by visiting AccessibilityMB.ca.

Resources on the World Wide Web Consortium

The World Wide Web Consortium's website offers several resources to learn about the guidelines and how to make websites more accessible. Here are a few links to these valuable resources:

- W3C Introduction to Web Accessibility
- W3C Accessibility, Usability, and Inclusion
- W3C Web Accessibility Perspectives
- Web Content Accessibility Guideline (WCAG)

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Contact Information

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Visit AccessibilityMB.ca for information, tools and templates.

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